Flying Snake

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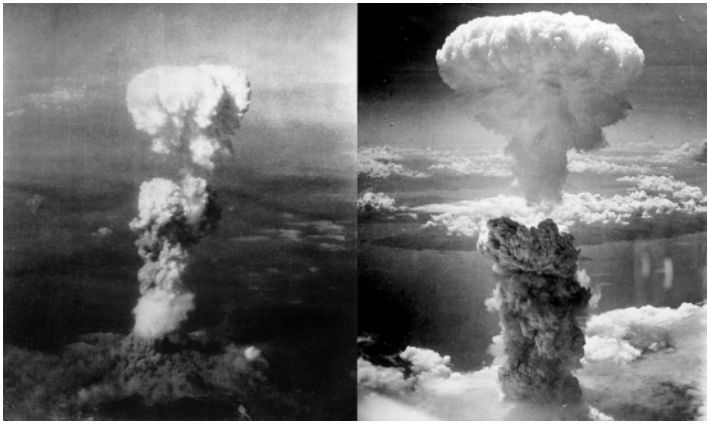

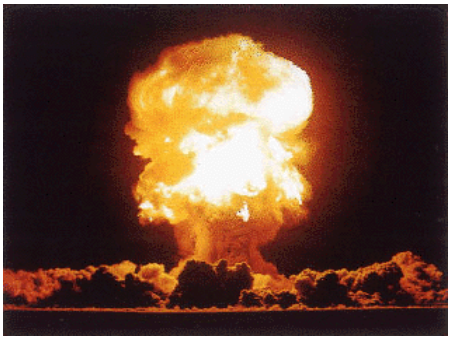

World War Three • Mystery Cats in Malaga • Con Rit and Brazilian Minhocao • Giant Spiders in Colorado • Flying Snake in Washington U.S. • Out of Place Alligator Gar in China • Human Longevity

ABOUT FLYING SNAKE

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DR DEVOS DIARY

"For I pray God for the introduction of new creatures into this island. For I pray God for the ostriches of Salisbury Plain, the beavers of the Medway and silver fish of Thames." Christopher Smart `Rejoice in the Lamb`.Poet,naturalist,lunatic (1722-1771)

Well it`s that time again you`ve all been waiting for so eagerly, barely able to contain yourselves. I hear you knocking down my front door and bounding up the stairs like some demented, half dead oar-fish on a California beach (if news reports are to be believed, this could herald a major earthquake on the coast of California, so you may be more concerned with that at the moment) ready to snatch Flying Snake 6 out of my tired hands. The Ropen-eyed (ugh!) amongst you will have noticed that this final issue of volume 2 of F.S. is somewhat shorter than previous issues. This is because it takes a lot of time and effort to put together each issue , but this also means that from now on I am able to bring out each issue more often. By which I mean about one every 2-3 months.

I hope you enjoy reading issue 6, (the numbering format on the front cover will be more realistic from now on, this is the final issue of volume 2, no. 7 is issue 1 of volume 3.) frankly I am surprised Flying Snake has lasted this long. I just *might* invest in a printer in the New Year, it would speed up the whole production process. Fortunately I know someone in Macclesfield who can help me in this. More difficult is how to handle the emotional trauma of finding out a few weeks ago that I was separated at birth from Andy Warhol, see below! Thanks to Bob Skinner for tracing this amazing story, now I understand why I have such strange artistic/music tastes. Actually, that word "strange" is deceptive, I prefer the Pre-Raphaelites to Pop Art or Post-Modernism. Until 2014, it`s Jocko Homo from me!

Dreams, Nightmares and Visions of World War 3

They're always there high in the skies...

Nagasaki nightmare, Nagasaki nightmare

Pretty as a picture in the generals' eyes

Nagasaki nightmare, Nagasaki nightmare

They've done it once, they'll do it again

They'll shower us all in their deadly rain

Nagasaki nightmare, Nagasaki nightmare

Nagasaki nightmare, Nagasaki nightmare

Nagasaki nightmare, Nagasaki nightmare…

[Crass - Nagasaki Nightmare]

I have found a number of web sites from organisations and people who claim to have received revelations about World War 3 or some not too distant future cataclysm. This section of Flying Snake covers just this. I cannot vouch for the veracity of what you are about to read. I simply suggest you dust down your fallout shelter and ignore politicians hopes we`ll survive! On that cheerful note, read on…

This prophecy was passed on to Mother Barbara by Bishop Aristocoli in 1911 shortly before his death .

”Tell the women they must belong absolutely to God. They must believe in the great things that are happening that God is doing on the earth. They must prepare their souls, their children and their husbands. And they will have very much work to do for God. Oh, what a great work the women will have to do in the end time, and the men will follow them.

Not one country will be without trial – do no be frightened of anything you will hear.

An evil will shortly take Russia and wherever this evil comes rivers of blood will flow. This evil will take the whole of the world and wherever it goes rivers of blood will flow because of it. It is not the Russian soul but an imposition of the Russian soul. It is not an ideology or a philosophy, but a spirit from hell.

In the last days Germany will be divided in two.

France will be just nothing.

Italy will be judged by natural disasters.

Britain will lose her empire and all her colonies and will come to almost total ruin, but will be saved through praying women.

America will feed the world, but will finally collapse.

Russia and China will destroy each other. Finally Russia will be free and from her believers will go forth and turn many nations to God."(1)

David Wilkerson had a series of visions and angelic visitations from the lord during his life time until his death in 2011, about the coming collapse of the U.S. economy and the destruction of America. In the economic collapse there will be riots and fires all across major cities in this nation. This will be a time of great apostasy and persecution in the church like never before. After the economic collapse of the United States the nation will be at its weakest point. A hydrogen holocaust will then sweep this nation in a Russian invasion of America. When Israel sees the destruction of America Russia will try to invade the Holy Land where 5/6th of the army's of Russia will be destroyed by Jesus himself.

David Wilkerson Prophecy 1973:

Worldwide recession caused by economic confusion"

"At most a few more fat flourishing years, and then an economic recession that's going to affect the life style of every wage-earner in the world. The world economists are going to be at loss to explain what's happening. It's going to start in Europe, spread to Japan and finally to the United States."

There will be a move toward a worldwide, unified monetary system. The US dollar will be hit bad and it will take years for it to recover.

The only real security will be in real estate (until a somewhat later stage, at which point this apparent security will also disappear).

"Nature having labor pains"

Environmentalists will come under heavy criticism.

There will be major earthquakes.

There will be a major famine.

Floods, hurricanes and tornadoes will increase in frequency.

"A new kind of cosmic storm appearing as a raging fire in the sky leaving a kind of vapor trail."

"A flood of filth and a baptism of dirt in America"

Topless women will appear on television, followed by full nudity.

Adult, X rated movies will be shown on cable television. Young people will gather at homes to watch this kind of material in groups.

Sex and the occult will be mixed.

There will be an acceptance of homosexuality, and the church will even say that it is a God-given gift.

"Rebellion in the home"

"I see the new number one youth problem in America and the world as hatred towards parents."

"A persecution madness against truly Spirit filled Christians who love Jesus Christ"

There will arise a world church consisting of a union between liberal ecumenical Protestants and the Roman Catholic Church, using Christ in name only.

There will be a hate Christ movement.

There will be a spiritual awakening behind the Iron and Bamboo Curtains.

Others

There will be another wave of riots.

There will be a fall in moral conduct.

There will be a new drug that will be popular with teenagers that will break down resistance and will encourage sexual activity.

Homosexual and lesbian ministers will be ordained and this will be heralded as a new breed of pioneer.

There will be nude dancing in church, but this will never be widespread.

There will be occult practices in churches.

David Wilkerson Prophecy 1992

"Thirty days of chastisement will fall on New York City such as the world has never seen. God is going to let down the walls. There will be unimaginable violence and looting. The violence will be so ferocious, it will shock the whole world. Our streets will be lined, not just with the National Guard, but with militia. A thousand fires will burn at the same time throughout the city. The Los Angeles fires were confined to a few sections of that city, but New York will be ablaze in all its boroughs. Fire trucks will not be able to handle it all. Trains and busses will be shut down. Billions of dollars will be lost. Broadway shows will stop completely. Businesses will flee the city in an unstoppable hemorrhage. Such things are expected in Third World countries, but not in a civilized nation like the United States. Yet, in not too long a time afterwards, New York City will go completely bankrupt. The Queen City will be cast into the dirt, becoming a city of poverty.

What I saw coming will be much more severe. Indeed, if America rejects God's call to turn back to Him, we'll face the same judgments Israel faced. And they will hit not only New York but also every region in the country. Even the heartland won't be spared. The nation's economy will collapse, and violence will erupt. Fires will consume our cities, and tanks will rumble through the streets. pray that God would give our President the same spirit that Josiah had, to tremble at his Word. "

David Wilkerson Prophecy 2009

"An Earth-Shattering Calamity is About to happen. It is going to be so frightening. We are all going to Tremble, even the godliest among us.

For ten years I have been warning about a thousand fires coming to New York City. It will engulf the whole megaplex, including areas of New Jersey and Connecticut. Major cities all across America will experience riots and blazing fires such as we saw in Watts, Los Angeles, years ago in August, 1965. There will be riots and fires in cities worldwide. There will be looting — including Times Square, New York City. What we are experiencing now is not a recession, not even a depression. *We are under God's wrath* (2)

As you can imagine there are videos on You Tube about the End of the World. Three of them are: Destruction of Tokyo by earthquake: Posted on June 26th 2012

A http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vjLdz2905nU

B. Dream concerning San Francisco earthquake: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ArH_F__yvLw&list=PLO9hCRgY1R-Ifnbtxrkgtecgbgdeinrx3 Posted on December 3rd 2011.

C. Dream: The Russians are coming! [To invade America-R] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g5yAN3o_Jpi Posted on February 14th 2012

Midnight Ministries

As the name suggests, this web site is dedicated to dreams about future disaster. These are in the form of a diary of dreams from 1997-2007. Some of the dreams are self serving,some are not. The following caught my eye:

November 1st 2000: Nuclear Attack ! It was as if I was in a tower block of flats in some large city in this country. As I looked out of the window what I saw astonished me. A huge,tall, black pillar or column of smoke towered up into the sky and on the top was a massive mushroom head or cloud.

For several moments I looked at this thing, not sure what to make of it. What was I seeing? Surely it could not be a nuclear explosion!? I could not believe my eyes. I was absolutely incredulous, but that is what it was!

Another dream: " On 21st March 2001,God gave me a dream about Judgement on This Land and the Church…We felt we were being affected by radioactive fallout from a nearby nuclear power station. Radioactivity was escaping from the nuclear power plant near Oxford and it was adversely affecting our health because we live about 20 miles downwind.

NUCLEAR BOMB BLASTS COMING IN LONDON AND OTHER CITIES

On 29th April 2001, Al (a friend of Zenya`s) was staying the night at our home. God gave him a dream depicting one of the terrible things that will happen to London as part of this increasing judgement.

In his dream , he was portrayed as if he were a member of a large powerful gang in London. Some sort of terrorist sect was warning of a bomb attack that would take place in the next 24 hours. He saw a nuclear device, extremely advanced weaponry, explode in a large subway or train station. Allan managed to escape from the blast. The radius of the explosion was very wide , and he found out later that roughly one million people had been

killed. At this point Allan woke up with a deep sense of sadness.

He said " I kept thinking how concerned I was for my friends in London, because the dream was so vivid , I actually believed it had happened! "

" I fell asleep again and dreamed that I was walking away from the wreckage. A boy younger than me, about 14 or 15 years old followed me through London to my car. He was smiling all the way, and I remembered thinking how I believed he had a large part to play in the bombing. When I got into my car, he did also, and asked for a lift. I felt insulted at this boy`s impudence." Isaiah prophesied of this time when youth`s would be society`s oppressors (Is 3:12) when God rises to judge His people." (Is 3: 13-14) (3)

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Human Longevity

"Like anybody, I would like to have a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will."

Martin Luther King

Here are some notes I found ,whilst clearing out trunks in my mother`s garage ,on human longevity. I no longer have the title of the book on me, though I think I found it in Salisbury Library. The pages in this book are 6-7 and 10 - 11.

16??

" In the reign of King James 1 [1601-1625 - R] (about this period) a morris-dance was exhibited in Herefordshire, consisting of twelve persons, whose age each,on average, amounted to one hundred years."

1635

Thomas Parr - 152

"Of Winnington, Shropshire, a poor countryman. At the age of eighty-eight, he married his first wife, by whom he had two children, who died young. At the age of one hundred and two, he fell in love with Catherine Milton, who he got with child, and for which he did penance in the church. At the age of one hundred and twenty, he

married a widow woman ;and at the very advanced age of one hundred and thirty , he was able to do any husbandry work, even the threshing of corn. He frequently ate by night, as well as by day; was contented with skimmed cheese, milk, coarse bread, small beer, and whey;and, what is remarkable, he ate at midnight, a little before he died. He had seen ten kings and queens of England. A few years before his death, he was brought to London by Thomas, Earl of Arundell, who presented him to King Charles 1; and about that time the Countess of Arundell presented a midwife to the queen, who was one hundred and twenty-three years old, and who exercised her profession but two years before. Parr was now a domestic in the family of the Earl of Arundell , fed high, and drank plentifully of the best wines, by which, after a constant, plain, and homely diet, the natural functions of the parts of his body were over-charged,

Parr died at the age of 152 years 9 months
The old old man or Son of John Winington in the Parish of Alberbury who was borne in the yeare 1483 in Rayne of King Edward
very old Thos Parr of

Fig 1 Portrait of Thomas Parr

Wikipedia Creative Commons

his lungs obstructed, and the habit of the whole body quite disordered; in consequence, there could not but speedily ensue a dissolution. If he had not changed his diet, he might possibly have lived many years longer. His body being opened after death, it was found to be very fleshy: his heart was thick and fat; his viscera very sound and strong, especially the stomach; his kidneys were covered with fat, and pretty sound, as were also the several members of his body.

1668

Mary Allison - 108

Of Thorlby, in the parish of Skipton. She was able to spin two years before her death.

John Sagar - 112

Of Burnley, Lancashire.

1670

Henry Jenkins - 169

Of Ellerton Upon Swale, Yorkshire. He remembered the battle of Plowden-Field, which was fought Sept 9, 1513, when he was about twelve years old. He was then sent to Northallerton with a cart-load of arrows, but an older boy was sent to the army with them, bows and arrows being then in use. At this time King Henry VIII was at Tournay, in France. At Ellereton there were also living,at the same time, four or five old men, reputed to be one hundred each, and they observed that Jenkins was an elderly man, when they first knew him, for he was born in another parish, and before church registers were in use. Jenkins was once butler to Lord Conyers; he perfectly well remembered the Abbot of Fountain`s Abbey, before the dissolution of the monasteries: and

was the oldest man born upon the ruins of this postdiluvian world. In the last century of his life, he was a fisherman, and often swam in the rivers after he had attained the age of one hundred years. His diet was course and sour. In the King`s remembrance =office, in the Exchequer, there is a record of a deposition in a cause by English Bill, between Anthony Clark and Smirkson, taken, April 1665, at Kettering,Yorkshire, where Henry Jenkins, of Ellerton-upon-Swale, labourer, aged one hundred and fifty-seven years, was produced and deposed as a witness. He was buried at Belton, Yorkshire. In 1743, a monument, with a suitable epitaph inscribed, was erected to his memory.

Thomas Wiggin - 108

Of Carlton, in Craven. He was able to walk till near the time of his death, and was a very fair corpse.

Alien Big Cats in Málaga?
By Javier Resines

In 1995, a British citizen had an unusual encounter with a mysterious feline in the mountain region near Comares, in Malaga province, Spain . A few years later, the region was invaded by a group of dangerous big cats, whose assaults to the farms in the area, caused fear among the population.

The phenomenon of alien big cats , with many cases in the UK also has dozens of appearances in Spain . Pumas, black panthers or strange cats seem to populate our forests sometimes approaching a short walk from our homes.

Our story begins in the town of Comares, Málaga. In September 1995, the *BBC Wildlife* magazine included the case of a British citizen, surnamed Ballan, who made a motorbike tour through the mountains near this town. While stopping to cool off he was surprised by a large animal, black, like a puma the size of a large mastiff dog.
The animal, which was not scared by the noise of the engine , was jumping and doing a strange dance around the witness, perhaps with hostile intent. The day after, Ballan returned to the meeting place and took a plaster cast of the footprint left by the unusual animal, a small paw print of about 40 mm in length. About the strange animal, nothing else was ever heard ...
After this encounter, no alien big cats had been seen again in the province of Malaga until August 2002 when an animal known as the Best of Genal appeared in the area . It was "*a strange animal, like a huge cat, brown with a weight of about fifty kilos .It had a tail and was jumping up and down* ", *and was jumping up and down* ", same animal as the one in Comares?
according to witnesses. Is this the e The towns of Atajate, Benadalid and Jimera de Libar were the scene of this being's attacks. A dead foal, fifteen sheep slaughtered and more than twenty different farm animals missing in the Serranía de Ronda, were its victims.

Despite the appearance of footprints similar to those that a large puma would leave, the official explanation given by the authorities refers to wild dogs. The Guardia Civil - the police force in charge of law in rural Spain- deploys more than fifty agents to catch the big cat. Dozens of witnesses see it in different places, but it is not caught. Gradually, despite the attacks occurring for months, the search is abandoned and the case is forgotten.

Invasion of Big Cats in Malaga

On September 25, 2007, the security forces started searching for a black cat of large size that has been seen running in a park near the residential area of Los Claveles, in Cala de Mijas.

At seven in the evening, Ean Ritchae, a neighbor of British origin, calls the police to report that he sees the animal climbing a tree, and takes a picture of that moment with his mobile phone. He witnessed the evolution of the cat with three other people. This behavior of the animal rule out the possibility that it was a large dog, according to police sources.

Four local police units and another four from Guardia Civil move to the village in search of the strange animal. Meanwhile, two patrols belonging to Seprona (Nature Protection Service of Guardia Civil) also flock to the place, carrying anesthetic rifles to numb the cat. After analyzing the photos taken by the main witness, both the authorities and a veterinarian consulted believe that it is a panther.

The fruitless search continued until dark, when it was discontinued for safety reasons. The next morning the search was resumed, without any positive results. The animal was gone...

However, this time, the animal (or another similar one) reappeared seven months later seventy kilometers north of the province. A property dedicated to the pig farming, located in the El Cañuelo, Campillos, suffered the attack of the cat , at least, three times during March and April 2008. Fourteen sows killed and eight injured was the balance of the assaults accomplished by an animal that " *has dark and bright fur and jumps from farm to farm in a very agile way* "said Ramon Garcia Valdecasas, the owner of the livestock farm attacked. "*Workers who live in the estate have seen it . They woke up with the spectacle of an entire row of bristles dead with their guts hanging out. It's dangerous to have a feline of those features on the loose , especially since Campillos is only five kilometers away from this field* "says Garcia.

To increase fear among neighbors, on a nearby farm, traces left allegedly by what appears to be a large cat prowling the area are found. The Ranger estimates, based on the depth of the prints, that the animal must weigh more than eighty kilos . The Guardia Civil assumes that the killing was the work of a pack of wild dogs as the victims were not eaten. The farmer does not believe in the explanation given by the authorities.

As reported by the English-written newspaper *The Olive Press*, the local council organized a hunt a few days after the attacks. Even some hikers got to spot two of those animals, whose size was four or five times that of a normal cat, on the road joining the towns of Monda and Guaro, 65 kilometers away.

However, and as it is becoming customary, the strange cat disappeared again without a trace ... until September of that year. In those days, Steve Rhodes, another British citizen living in La Cala de Mijas, could photograph and film the cat who might be the one seen over the past year in Mijas, Campillo, Alhaurin and Monda, among other towns .

The video, taken with a mobile phone and with images of poor quality, shows how a dark animal of considerable size prowls along the side of a road and disappears behind a shrubbery . The video of this animal, named " La Cala cougar " can be watched at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nz38M8AD6Mw .

According to the Rhodes' testimony , "it *is definitely bigger than a domestic cat, it has a much longer tail and it is very agile jumping between rocks .I 've heard that has attacked goats on the nearby hillsides* " Of course the restless cat was not found or seen again...

Was it the same cat that had been seen in other places? Or were there several animals that happen to coincide in the same space and time? Are they specimens that have run away from their owners? Or have we come across a possible unknown species of big cat in Malaga?

A colony of hybrids cats

In Spain there are no big cats in the wild. We have three different species of wild cats: the wildcat, the Iberian lynx and the genet. The wildcat (Felis silvestris) is similar to a domestic cat, although bulkier and of larger size, wide head and short muzzle.

The lynx (Lynx pardina), meanwhile, is of a much larger size than the wildcat . It is more robust, with long legs and a short tail with black

sides. It does not usually weigh more than 13 kilos.

The genet (Genetta genetta) is undoubtedly the most curious and interesting one. Not so much for its size, as it is no more than a meter long and two kilos of weight, but for its striking yellowish gray fur and their nocturnal habits.As we see, there isn't a native species that may be the cause of the strange sightings that occur in Malaga and many other parts of Spain. But then ... what are we looking for?
The most credible hypothesis to explain these appearances is that of the existence of a colony of hybrid big cats that have managed to adapt to the wild. Pumas, panthers and other felines may have escaped from their owners and have managed to live in freedom. This would explain the curious behavior of these animals, accustomed to human presence, but trying to adapt to their new life.

Maybe these big cats are reproducing and creating new and hybrid species determined to explore the new territory. Perhaps they are winning, slowly, new hunting areas located closer and closer to man ...

Fig 1 Map of big cat sightings in Malaga area.

Fig 2 Comares, location of first occurrence of the first alien big cat in 1995.

Fig 3 Guardia Civil search in Cala de Mijas, 2007.

Fig 4 Pig injured in Campillos, 2008

Fig 5 Footprint left by the cat in Campillos, 2008

Fig 6 Video capture of the La Cala cougar, 2008

Fig 7 Genetta genetta

The Brazilian Minhocao and the Vietnamese Con Rit

Carl P.Marshall

The following article Investigates two cryptids and questions the feasibility of proposed identity theories put forward by researchers concerning these unknown animals.

Minhocao

Ethnoknown from the Upper Paraguay in South America, the monstrous *minhocao* (sometimes spelled *minocao*) is thought to be a extremely large, elongate subterranean creature, adorned with a pair of long cephalic appendages and an inconvenient habit of digging enormous trenches that the local populace believe is responsible for uprooting orchards and redirecting the courses of rivers - note: the latter reminds one of a similar activity performed by the alleged Congolese neo-dinosaur *mokele mbembe.* The *minhocao* is often considered by some authors to be an undescribed species of gigantic caecilian (Gymnophiona); a limbless subterranean amphibian that can attain a documented length of 1.5 m (4 ft 11 in).
But could the *minhocao,* rather than being a giant gymnophionian, actually be a mega myriapod? albeit a species who has taken a long and unique evolutionary path.

The following quote is taken from Dr Karl Shukers *Alien Zoo* article on a *minhocao*-like cryptid for Fortean Times Magazine and lends credence to the possibility of an invertebrate identity. In the article Dr Shuker relates an encounter described to him by email from a corespondent named Samwell Rowan, concerning Rowan's mothers sighting during the late 1980's or early 1990's in a Peruvian rainforest.

She told me she was walking by herself in the jungle and saw what she initially thought was a large, black snake moving through the leaves on the forest floor. She then noticed it had armoured plates and may have had numerous small legs. Both my mother and I are aware that there are giant centipedes in that region but the size of

it does not match up. She describes it as being well over one foot [30cm thick] can giant black millipede, known in binomial nomenclature as cm] thick and never saw its head nor tail even though she observed it for several minutes. She guessed it must have been at least twenty feet [6m] long. She didn't mention her sighting to me in full detail until a couple of years later because she assumed it was a centipede and was not aware of the minhocao. I was not aware of the minhocao either until about a year ago when I first found your website.

The worlds largest extant species of verified myriapod is the African giant black millipede, known in binomial nomenclature as *Archispirostreptus gigas*; it is found in lowland parts of east Africa and has attained a fully documented length of 38.6cm long - seen in a domestic specimen kept in Coppell, Texas, USA. These dimensions are indeed along way off the monstrous claims of Samwell Rowan's mother and of course for fundamental physiological reasons, no known terrestrial arthropod attains anywhere near these gargantuan dimensions.

Con rit

(Multifinned Sea Creature of the China Sea)

Of the relatively few identities put forward in an attempt to classify the little known Vietnamese sea monster - the *con rit*, theories are usually loosely divided into two categories - cetacean or invertebrate! The father of cryptozoology - Dr Bernard Heuvelmans, in his phenomenal work *In the Wake of Sea Serpents* suggested the name "*many finned sea serpent*" along with the parataxonomic name - *Cetioscolpenda aelani* (Aelan's cetacean centipede) for the random reports of giant, elongate multifinned sea serpents most notably reported from the China Sea. He estimated that they were approximately 60 - 70 feet long and were probably extremely long versions of the primitive cetacean (archeocete) *Basilosaurus*. A major problem with the cetacean theory is that reconstructions made by Heuvelmans and other researchers have the *con rit* looking somewhat atypical for any known cetacean species. Heuvelmans's reconstruction has the con rit looking like an aquatic *Ankylosaurus* (a herbivorous dinosaur of the order Ornithischia) with an additional bony back plate and numerous lateral projections. When Heuvelmans was researching for In The Wake Of Sea Serpents the discovery of what seemed to be bony plates in association with fossil archeocetes seemed to corroborate

the idea that in life they possessed some kind of armour plating, but this idea was quickly made obsolete and in modern reconstructions this feature is now completely absent. The con rits are very rarely seen, which could indicate that similar to the giant squid *Architeuthis dux.* and the colossal squid *Mesonychoteuthis hamiltoni* they are deep ocean dwelling invertebrates rather than air breathing mammals of which the latter would definitely have been observed more frequently. With all this in mind a huge invertebrate adapted to a life at abyssal depths seems more plausible.

The invertebrate theory.

Although most cryptozoologists regard the identity of the *con rit* as a cetacean, or at very least a mammalian of some unknown species, there is another view within cryptozoological circles that justifiably links the *con rit* to the invertebrates, specifically the taxonomic class Myriapoda. Additionally the name *con rit* is a Vietnamese (Austroasiatic) name for millipedes and centipedes.
The following report was made by *Tran Van Con* of a beached carcass washed up on Hongay beach, Vietnam. This description was related to *A. Krempf*, Director of the Indo-China oceanographic and fisheries service in 1921.

Hongay beach, Vietnam 1883.

"Here is some information which although it smacks of the marvelous, cannot fail to interest you. I received it at sea from the coxswain of a Customs launch, a 56-year old native called Tran Van Con.
38 years ago (that is to say in 1883, 14 years before Lieutenant Lagresille's account), this Annamite saw and touched the so-called sea serpent. Here is the account, faithfully translated: the animal was washed up and dead: it was a carcase in a very advanced state of putrefaction. The head had gone. The body alone was 60 feet long by 3 feet wide.
The animal was formed of successive segments almost alike one another. Each segment was 2 feet long and 3 feet wide and had a pair of appendages 2 feet 4 inches long. The teguments were of a remarkable consistency and rang like sheet-metal when hit with A stick. The colour of this tegumentary envelope was dark brown on the dorsal surface and light yellow on the ventral surface.

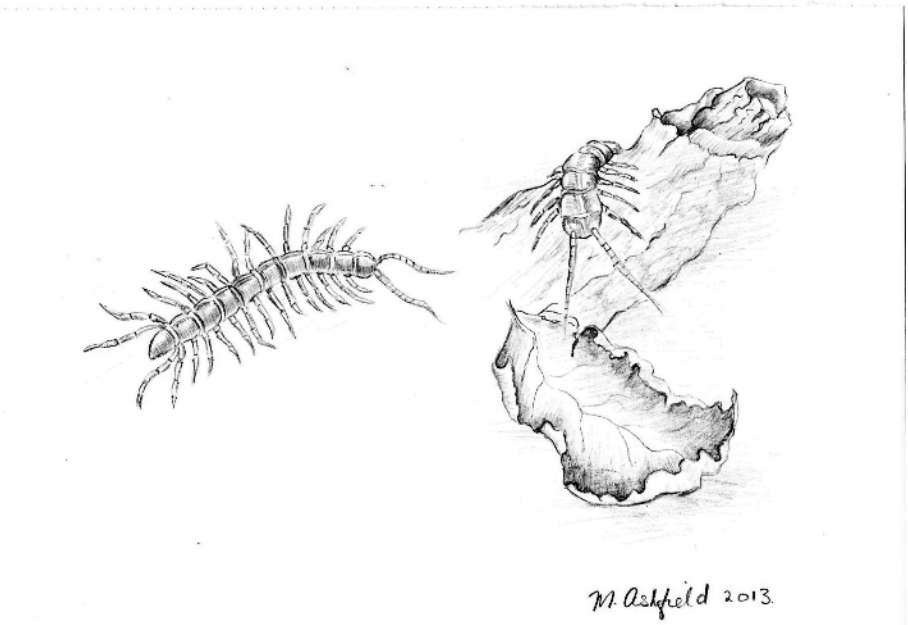

Fig 1 Drawing of Con-Rit by Maureen Ashfield

The stench that arose from this prodigious animal was such that even the Annamites would not go near it, and it was decided to tow the remains out to sea and sink them.
The name given to this animal by my informant is con rit, or "millipede". It is this, according to its name and from all the description that I have given you, an Arthropod ... unless it is all a dream, and certainly it is very detailed, and as another theory about the sea-serpent can do no harm, I have thought fit to send you this information, but ask you to await further details before doing anything about it."
Another potentially important sighting was made in 1899 by the HMS Narcisuss off Cape Falcon, Algeria. *Lieutenant Boothby*, the officer of the watch, observed a strange sea creature in the water at 5am and duly recorded it in the ships log.
Cape Falcon, Algeria 1889.
"Observed a sea monster on the port bow, certainly over 150 feet in length; apparently propelled by large fins, and lying very low in the water."
When an investigative journalist asked a signalman who was also a witness to the strange creature whether he simply saw a string of porpoises, he gave the following reply.
"We saw some porpoises just after and their motion was not the same. You could see the porpoises jump and tumble over, but this creature lay steadily on the surface, gently gliding through the water ... The monster seemed to be propelled by an immense number of fins. You could see the fins propelling it along at about the same rate as the ship was going. The fins were on both sides, and appeared to be turning over and over. There were fins right down to the tail.
Another curious thing was that it spurted up water [sic] like a whale, only the spouts were very small and came from various parts of the body."
Both the above sightings are significant, firstly because of the corroboration between the witnesses and also because of the immense number of fins described as independently movable which reinforces the invertebrate theory.
An ancestral contender
Arthropleura was the largest terrestrial invertebrate the world has ever known, attaining lengths of up to 3 metres. Based on phylogenetic research the taxonomic class Arthropleuridae, is now believed to be a representative of the sub-phylum Myriapoda, which contains the millipedes

and centipedes, but had previously been aligned with the sub-phylum Chelicerata which classifies the arachnids and the Limulids (horse shoe crabs) . It is now widely excepted the Arthropleuridae evolved from a crustacean-like ancestor!
Living in the dense forests and swamplands of the upper Carboniferous between 340-280 million years ago, *Arthropleura* utilized the high level of atmospheric oxygen that its prehistoric world offered and also the lack of terrestrial predators by attaining gigantic lengths of up to 3 metres. Contrary to earlier theories that *Arthropleura* was a predator, identification of pollen spores discovered in the guts of fossilized specimens indicate that it was more likely herbivorous, feeding on a variety of plant types; however It is still possible that the larger species were omnivorous. *Arthropleura* supposedly flourished up until the early Permian period when climate change caused increasing aridity and habitat loss worldwide until the genus supposedly became extinct.
But what if *Arthropleura* did not entirely die out? What if a few species adapted to a new ecological niche, survived extinction and went unnoticed by the zoological community? Moreover what if they were responsible for at least some sightings of multi-finned sea serpents? Could *Arthropleura*, in order to survive, have taken to the oceans to escape the desertification of its once semi-aquatic rainforest home, and adapt into a primarily aquatic existence? The main problem with this theory is that it is unknown if the Arthropleuridae were in any way saline tolerant, but as previously mentioned they seem to have descended from a crustacean-type ancestor, so it could be considered plausible that a basal myriapod might have retained some primitive physiological traits that could have hypothetically helped it to adapt and survive extinction into historical times - maybe even up until the present day!
It is interesting to note that in the 1899 Algeria sighting mentioned above the witnesses described how it *"spurted up water like a whale..."* and *"...only the spouts were very small and came from various parts of the body"*. I propose this witness could be describing how the aquatic [neo] *Arthropleura* regulate excess salt levels by expelling it from their exoskeleton!

As the high levels of oxygen dissipate over the eons, the *Arthropleura* could have retained or even increased their gigantic size by adapting to a marine environment where their mass would be at equilibrium in the hydrostatic support of the water itself - this phenomenon is known as *Abyssal Gigantism* - other examples include the giant isopod *Bathynomus giganteus*, the giant amphipod *Alicella gigantea*,

the Japanese spider crab (see below), the king of herrings *Regalecus glesne* (a 12 m oarfish), the deep water stingray *Plesiobatis daviesi*, the seven-arm octopus *Haliphron atlanticus* and a number of squid species (order Teuthida). For this reason I personally doubt whether modern *Arthropleura* sightings could be responsible for the reports of the semi subterrestrial *minhocao* mentioned previously.

Other possible explanations:

(1) The misidentified backbone of a whale.
(2) The misidentified caudal vertebrae of an oarfish - *Regalecus glesne*
(3) A surviving sea scorpion (Class Eurypterida) - A group of aquatic arhropods that flourished from the Ordovician to the Permian periods, 500 - 250 million years ago.
(4) A giant unknown crustacean proposed by Dr Karl Shuker. The largest known living crustacean is the Japanese spider crab *Macrocheira kaempferi*, which has a claw span of 10 - 12ft but a body size not much over 1ft.

Much of the information for this article came from Micheal A. Woodleys informative book *In the Wake of Bernard Heuvelmans* in-which he suggests the parataxonomic name *Marioscolpendra aelani* - Aelan's Sea Centipede (Woodley 2007). Woodley also suggests that the *con rit* would belong to completely new family and new order within the taxonomic class Arthropleuridae and even goes on to suggest that the specimen-based descriptions of the beached carcass observed by *Tran Van Con* in 1887, and described to *A. Kempf* in 1921 may represent sufficient in hand evidence to constitute a type specimen or this claim. For a more detailed study of the Vienamese *con rit* and other reported sea serpents, I highly recommend reading *In the Wake of Bernard Heuvelmans* (CFZ Press).

Illustration *Archispirostreptus gigas* - Photographed at Stratford Butterfly Farm.

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Giant Spiders in Colorado

Two newspaper stories on giant spiders in Colorado and an intriguing image from Google Earth ,below.

A Colorado Spider Story

The Daily Star

"A short distance from Buena Vista says the Leadville (Col.) *Chronicle* is a cave inhabited by spiders which differ from other spiders in their enormous size and are quite useful to the needy people of that region. The cave was discovered last December by a party of sightseers and the spiders and their work were witnessed. On entering the cave one is first struck by the funny looking webs. They are worked like webs of other spiders, but every fiber is ten times as large as the ones woven by ordinary spiders. On passing further into the cave the spiders are encountered. They are about the size of small birds and make a strange sound while weaving their web. Their webs are so tough and the fibers so large that it is almost an impossibility to break down a web. Some four weeks ago while looking at the cave

Fig 1 Giant Spiders Web in Colorado

Google Earth

a miner got to examining the webs. Their strands were about the size of a No 12 thread, and he thought that they could be used for thread. Having a needle in his possession he broke off one of the strands and found that it fitted the needle. Sewing on a loose button to test the efficacy he found it as strong as silk thread, and that it answered his every purpose. Since then the people have flocked in and carried away hosts of the webs, but the spiders do not appear to object in the least. There is some talk among capitalists of starting a thread factory there and using the webs for thread." (1)

COLORADO`S MONSTER SPIDERS

Scientific Investigation of Insects

Of which some marvellous

Tales were told

"Prof E.T. Laughton has returned to his home in New York after spending the winter in exploring the mountains near Buena Vista and investigating the habits of a species of monster spiders found in the Middle Cottonwood pass. Little definite is known about these spisers,says the Sun, but around them has been gathered a mass of Indian legend and prospectors` yarns that rival those of Munchausen. Many years ago these spiders lived in a cave easily reached by tourists. It was in a valley two miles northeast from Harvard City, then a thriving mining camp eight miles west of Buena Vista.

In 1830 a man named Shultz cut his way into the spiders` den.

Fig 2

Colorado.

Wikipedia Commons

He did not return and a week later a searching party found his body partly buried in the spiders cave under a mass of falling rock. As it would have required considerable timbering at an expense of several hundred dollars to recover the body, and as the man had no known relatives, it was left undisturbed. Shultz`s skeleton is still in the cave, but the spiders have found another home further back in the mountain.

Some of the tales told about these spiders are given in an old letter which has just been found in Buena Vista. It says:

" A short distance out of Buena Vista there is a cave swarming with spiders of immense size, some of them having legs four inches in length and bodies as large as large as that of a canary bird. The cave was discovered in 1868 and was often visited by pioneers on their way to California, who obtained their webs for use in the place of thread.

" Early and late the cave resounds with a buzzing sound emitted by the spiders as they weave their webs. The webs were tested in `71 and found to be composed of silk of the finest quality. The skins of the spiders make good gloves, as they are pliable and require no tanning.

" A number were captured tamed, and manifested great affection for all members of the family. They were far superior to a cat in exterminating rats and mice, following their prey into the holes in the walls and ceilings. One spider, kept as a pet by a Buena Vista lady, used to stay all night at the head of her bed acting as a sentinel. " (2)

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Out of place Alligator Gar in South China 2011 - transcript

June 6, 2011 (Hunan) Ling Lake Hengyang visitors flocked to a restaurant, but many people did not come to dinner, but to visit the store owner from the vegetable market Amoy back 2 "duckbill snake"

A few days ago, shop owner Mr. Yi to procurement markets, a fish pond in the mysterious Bi Tanqian found four , the image of its mouth duck, covered with needle-like coarse and fine crowded teeth, dorsal fin rear-ward, caudal fin rounded, like a fish like a snake.

Stall holders told Mr. Yi, fish, fishing in the Xiangjiang River, was also pulled together a large bream, snapper soil. Mr. Yi is very curious, they spend 50 dollars to buy two of them.

"Two fish body length of 40 cm, 8 cm long beak, tail length of 5 cm and weighs about 1.1 pounds of it about 20 teeth jaw, palate there are 40 or so, the teeth about 0.5 to 1 cm." Mr. Yi said: "I sectional fish, knife did not cut into it, scales particularly hard, scraping could blow open."

Mr. Yi said that he wanted to buy back the taste fresh, but he never seen such a fish, not to eat.

Fig 1 Alligator Gar

Fig 2 Alligator Gar

Alligator gar, not Hawaii, the origin of the Americas.

Toxic to see what all want to eat, you eat dead

Powerful ah able to catch this thing

Gar not poisonous

Little Volunteer 660 : I declare the fight really begins, you look up the Internet, I am lazy ....

Ancestor of Sphenodon

What is worse? Which is brain damage SB will release gar, really did not mind! To do so would seriously disrupt river ecosystems

Gar eggs are toxic only

Gar toxic, thick skin can lungs, destruction of the ecological environment

May be the descendants of the ancient dinosaurs platypus

Gar, invasive species.

Gar toxic, thick skin can lungs, destruction of the ecological environment.

May be the descendants of the ancient dinosaurs platypus

Gar, invasive species. (1)

Fig 3. Location of Hengyang, Hunan Province . Wikipedia Creative Commons.

The **Facebook** commentary: Richard Muirhead: Can anyone translate these into English? I thought I had.

Robert Michaels: Aloha!Has a tooth ache.

Craig Michael; Ellison I cant translate the page but the animal in the picture is a Alligator Gar Fish.

Ashlan Yost: Gar for sure .

David Smith: It's a Cuban gar or a Shortnosed gar.

Jaymie Obrie: Is that a snake fish which is an invasive species of fish from China?

Richard Muirhead : Looks pretty weird,whatever it is!

Andrew D Gable: No, snakeheads don't have long snouts like that though they are possessed of the large fangs. I;ll go along with every-one else that it's some variety of gar.

Richard Muirhead : According to the Alligator gar page on Wikipedia the only part of China where they`ve been found is Hong Kong

Brian A. Hammond :It says something along the lines of "4 strange fishes with duck beaks and serpent bodies were fished out Xiangjiang river in Hunan provence. They are presumed to be hidden creatures (cryptids). From the Baidu web forum.

Marc Britton: It's a gar species for certain- whether it's an alligator gar, short nose gar or long nose gar - I cannot tell. They are a very ancient order of fisher and have a worldwide distribution.

According to **Wikipedia** the range of the Alligator Gar is as follows: There have been few notable sightings of Alligator Gar outside North America.

In February 2007, a 1.5 m (4.9 ft) Alligator Gar was allegedly found swimming in Jakarta, Indonesia, when that city was hit by a major flood (see External Links below). In January 2008, a 3 kg (6.6 lb) alli-gator gar was found by fishermen in Bera, Pahang, Malaysia, when it was entangled in a fishing net.

In November 2008, a 0.5 to 0.6 m (1.6 to 2.0 ft) long Alligator gar was caught in the north of Esenguly, Turkmenistan by two officials of Turkmenistan Fishery Protection. Dr. R. Mayden, Saint Louis Univers

-ity and Dr. Eric Hilton, Virginia Institute of Marine Science confirmed that it was probably Atractosteus spatula.

On September 4, 2009 a 1 m (3.3 ft) long Alligator Gar was found in Tak Wah Park in Tsuen Wan, Hong Kong. In the next two days, at least 16 other Alligator Gars, with the largest one measuring 1.5 m (4.9 ft) long, were found in ponds in public parks in Hong Kong. As reported by nearby residents, the fish were released in the ponds by aquarium hobbyists and had lived there for some years. However, after a complaint made by a citizen who falsely identified the fish as crocodiles, terms like "Horrible Man-eating Fish" were found in the headlines of some major local newspapers. Government officials decided to remove all the fish from the ponds as they claimed the species had no conservation value and would affect the local ecology if left in the ponds. The Leisure and Cultural Services Department said it would offer non-dangerous fish to animal welfare groups and charities. The fish that was caught first died later that day, and claims have been made that the local government does not treat the gars in an animal-friendly way - they were seen catching the fish with improvised nets and garbage cans. On September 6 the government euthanized all of the fish as it said that there were no organizations willing to take them. On September 8 however, the Hong Kong Ocean Park announced that it was willing to take the fish for exhibition and education to the public. Five surviving gars, caught on September 7, were sent to the Ocean Park.

On January 21, 2011, 1.5 m (4.9 ft) Alligator Gar was caught at a canal in Pasir Ris, Singapore by two recreational fishermen. The fish was taken to a nearby pond where the owner confirmed it as an Alligator Gar, not an Arapaima as the men initially thought.

Alligator Gars have also recently become "trophy" fish for private aquariums, particularly in Japan. In June 2011, a group of men from Florida and Louisiana were indicted on charges of illegally removing wild gar from the Trinity River in Texas and attempting to ship the fish to Japan at the behest of private collectors. It is alleged that the largest of the fish could have fetched $40,000 in the Japanese black market. (2)

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A Mystery Sea Creature in 1888

73.—DESCRIPTION OF AN EEL-LIKE CREATURE TAKEN IN A NET AT NEW HARBOR, MAINE, IN 1880.*

By S. W. HANNA.

In August, 1880, the following item appeared in the Sea-Side Press:

"S. W. Hanna, of Pemaquid, caught what might be called a young sea-serpent in his nets the other day. It was about 25 feet long and 10 inches in diameter in the largest part, and was shaped like an eel. The head was flat, and the upper part projected out over the mouth, which was small and contained sharp teeth. It was dead when found."

Mr. Allen noticed this newspaper item, and, having written to Mr. Hanna inquiring whether there was any truth in it, was favored with the following reply:

"The report you saw in the Press in regard to a marine monster being caught by me was correct. The fish was about 25 feet in length and from 8 to 10 inches in diameter, with a tail like an eel. The skin was not like a scale-fish, but more like a dog-fish or shark, though a great deal finer in quality. I did not save the fish for the reason that I did not know what I had caught. In fact, I considered it a streak of ill-luck rather than good fortune, having torn my nets very badly and otherwise bothering me in my business. The fish could have been grappled twenty-four hours after, it being in only 4 fathoms of water and it being a small shoal, with deep water all around it. A storm arose later, which made it impossible to do so.

"NEW HARBOR, MAINE, *September* 14, 1880."

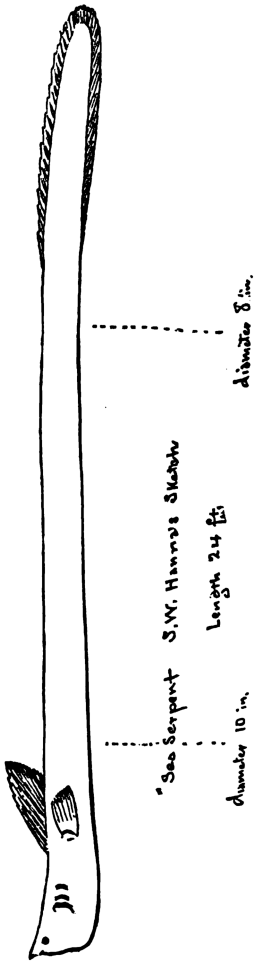
Upon receipt of the above, Mr. Allen made a more specific inquiry, as follows:

"I am inclined to think that you caught a rare fish or animal, and I am interested to know more about it. Will you please inform me about its head? Was it like a snake's head? Did the mouth open like a snake's mouth? Were there any gills? Were there any fins near the head? Were there any fins on the back? Will you please draw with a pencil the general shape of the head and also the general shape of the whole body? I do not wish to give you too much trouble, but I think such a description is important.

"HARTFORD, CONN., *September* 17, 1880."

* This account has been compiled from correspondence which passed between Mr. Hanna and J. M. Allen, of Hartford, Conn., and subsequently between Mr. Hanna and Professor Baird. The attention of the latter was called to the matter by Mr. Allen.—C. W. S.

Meanwhile Mr. Allen had written to Professor Baird, who also addressed a series of questions to Mr. Hanna. Under date of September 22 Mr. Hanna replied, giving the same in substance to both Mr. Allen and Professor Baird. The letter to the latter was as follows:



"To the first question I answer, yes. From the head to the tail (exclusive of the head) it did look very much like an eel. Second, the body was round or very near that form. From the head (exclusive of the same) toward the tail was about 12 or 15 feet. The tail was like that of a common eel. Third, the color of its back was of a slate or fish color; belly, grayish-white. Fourth, there were two fins, one on either side, a little abaft the head. They were not stiff-pointed fins like the shark or sword-fish, but more like the side-fins of the cod or sun-fish, only they were in size to correspond with the fish. The top or dorsal fin was like the corresponding fin on the cod. I do not know whether it was stationary or closed, like the top fin of the mackerel and other fish of the same species. To the fifth question I answer, no. All the fins there were on the tail were like those of the eel. Sixth, no. Seventh, there was no projection, elevation, or crest forward of the dorsal fin. The skin was like that of the dog, but very much finer. The head did resemble that of the shark, only more stunted, *i. e.*, it did not lengthen out like the shark's. It looked more like the head of the sucker. The mouth was very small, not any larger than the mouth of a good-sized dog-fish, with fine, briery teeth, and located at the extreme end of the head or nose. The fish was dead when caught. Its mouth was open, and the smallness and location of the same attracted my attention more than any other part of the fish. Inclosed you will find a drawing, as near as I can recollect, of the fish.

"NEW HARBOR, ME., *September* 22, 1880."

On receipt of this letter and the drawing, Professor Baird made the following further inquiry:

"I notice you mark three strokes on the side of the neck as in the shark. Was this the case, or was there a small opening covered by a flap as in ordinary fish? I do not quite understand whether the snout projected beyond the mouth or not, or whether the mouth is in the under part of the head, or in the upper.

"Was there anything in the tail of the fish bearing a resemblance to that of the shark, or did you consider that the resemblance to the eel was more decided?

"You made a distinct fin just back of the head, while the third of the fish towards the tail has a fin running along the back and around on the under side. Does this correspond with your recollection?

"It is a matter of great interest to determine what the fish was. It was apparently something entirely new.

"WASHINGTON, D. C., *September* 24, 1880."

Mr. Hanna then replied as follows:

"The three strokes on the side of the neck in the drawing are correct, corresponding with those of the shark. As regards the mouth, the upper part of the head did project a very little, but not more than from half an inch to an inch. The projection was not so great as in the shark, whose snout projects so that the mouth is cut off half the distance of the head back.

"There was nothing in the tail that had any resemblance to that of the shark. The inference that I drew from your letter is that I caught what the fishermen know as the swingle-tail shark, but such was not the case. I am a fisherman of twenty-five years' experience, and am acquainted with about every species of fish from the capes of Virginia to French Saint Peters [Saint Pierre, off Newfoundland], and I never saw a fish that resembled that one entirely. The shark family is very numerous in the waters of Maine, and there is hardly a day that we do not come in contact with them in some form or other. The swingle-tail is not very plenty here. I have caught one in my day, and have seen a half-dozen. The nurse-fish or liver-shark is another kind. It is a bottom fish, and rarely if ever comes to the surface. There is another member of the shark family that inhabits these waters, but is very scarce, having a shark's head, and the rest of the body like dog-fish.

The tail of this strange fish corresponds in the drawing with my recollection. Being dead, I examined it some ten or fifteen minutes, hesitating whether to tow it to land or let it go. I decided if I landed it I should lose $20 that day in my business, and so could not afford to bother with it. If I had been nearer to Boston or New York, probably I should have saved it.

"NEW HARBOR, ME., *September* 27, 1880."

Letter to Flying Snake

THE GARDEN DORMOUSE IN ENGLAND

October 9th 2013

From Richard George:

Dear Richard,

Carl Marshall`s photo of a possible European Beech Marten from Dorset reminded me of another vagrant mammal, the Garden Dormouse, *Eliomys quercinus.* This species is resident throughout France, and according to David Macdonald`s *Collins Field Guide to the Mammals of Britain and Europe* , six specimens were killed by a cat in Dover in 1991 (p.277) . He gives no follow-up reference. I find it perplexing that six were killed at one fell swoop: had a female given birth on our side of the Channel?

Turning to Ronald M.Nowak`s *Walker`s Mammals of the World* (1991) ,we discover that skeletal remains of this same species have been found at Roman York, leading T.P.O.` Connor, in J.Zool. 210: 620-22 (1986) , to speculate that they were imported into Roman Britain for culinary purposes, like the better known *glis glis* or Edible Dormouse.

The Romans factory-farmed dormice in pens called *gliraria.* Could Garden have escaped and formed wild populations in Britain in ancient times? More recently, could stowaway Garden Dormice have been, like certain bird species, regular rare visitors? In the future, via the Channel Tunnel, might they colonise the extreme south of England? Have they done this already?

Before I get over-excited, over to you!

With best wishes,

Richard George.

Fig 1 Garden Dormouse

Wikipedia Creative Commons.

"ODD FISH" IN WISCONSIN

I posted this on Facebook on Chad Arment`s page on September 4th 2013.

Strange story from Wisconsin:The Richmond Climax,June 8th 1904. page 12 NEW WISCONSIN FISH STORY

A strange creature resembling a long eared dog with six webbed feet and fins like a fish , was caught in the river near La Crosse, Wis, the other day by Oscar Millard a clam fisherman.The animal was equipped with the tail of a fish and had a head shaped much like a walrus. The species is unknown to local scientists. Nothing like it has ever been seen before.[Thanks to Bob Skinner for help with this] Chad believed it was a tall tale.

A CURIOUS RABBIT

The Wisconsin Naturalist

Vol 1 Jan 1891 no. 6 page 89

On the 10th of last September I shot on my place,in Jefferson county,this state, a specimen of the common Gray Rabbit (*Lepus sylvatieus*) , that presented some remarkable peculiarities. It was of about medium length, perhaps slightly less than the average, but the body was much slimmer than in a normal specimen. The head,neck,feet and tail did not differ in any way from an ordinary rabbit, but the rest of the body was covered with long silky ashy-blue hair, divided lengthwise dorsally, and falling gracefully down the sides, hanging like a fine fringe on either side. There was also a very distinct "part" on the ventral surface, the hair lying close to the body and pointing straight toward the sides. The hair on the under surface was not so luxuriant or soft as on the back, and of a lighter color.

The longest hairs of the back were slightly over four and one-half inches in length,and looked like very fine goat`s hair,but of course,much finer and very soft and flossy. A more puzzling feature of this specimen was that the sex could not be determined; careful dissection showed

rudimentary or imperfectly developed parts of both sexual organs. This feature will be the subject for an article in a medical journal [which I haven`t seen - R] and will not be farther treated here. The specimen is mounted and belongs to the Albion Academy Museum and Library Association [who I have written to -R] , where it is a never-failing subject of interest to visitors. We would be pleased to hear from any one who has noticed anything similar. [And so would I ! -R]

A FLYING SNAKE

Forest and Stream vol 5 1875-6 page 68

A FLYING SNAKE - Yesterday we were met by a friend , who inquired, in an excited manner, if we had ever seen a snake that had wings, "and flew through the air with the greatest of ease?" From his statements we learn that while two boys, named Remington and Jenkins,the former from this city,and the latter a Platte Countain were hunting in the woods, a serpent was seen approaching them, about four feet above the earth. Jenkins took off his hat, and throwing it over the snake, succeeded in capturing it. It is over one foot long,spotted, and has wings about the size of a man`s head. The boys have the serpent preserved in alcohol. - *Leavenworth Times.*

A SNAKE WITH EARS

Forest and Stream vol 5 page 116

The Reading *Eagle* states that a correspondent in Robeson township[Berks County,Pennsylvania-R] sends it an account of a large swamp black snake,recently killed in that vicinity, that was found to have two ears about two inches apart,three inches and a half from the back of the mouth. The ears were about half an inch in length and shaped like a rabbit`s.

WHITE HEDGE-SPARROWS

REARED BY BLACKBIRDS?

A WREXHAM MYSTERY

Chester Chronicle August 26th 1933

To hear of someone seeing a white hedge sparrow is rare, but to see and handle a specimen is very exceptional. It appears that a nest of three or four hedge-sparrows have been reared in or near the garden of Mr G.M. Pickering of Hafod-y-Bwleh, Wrexham. All the young birds are pure white, with rose-pink eyes, and pale legs and feet. Not a feather of any other colour, so they are what are known as albinos. Particulars of the mystery surrounding the rearing of these young birds are given in a letter received from Mr Pickering, which reads thus: " I have kept a sharp look out for the parent birds, but have not seen them. The young white hedge sparrows I saw several times being fed by an ordinary blackbird and this was how I was able to catch the specimen sent sent to you uninjured for the Museum. The blackbirds, at the time of the capture, were raiding the Morello cherries in the garden, so to catch the white hedgesparrow, I lifted the net on the berries and waited until it followed the blackbird into the net; then I closed the opening and caught the bird alive - and the blackbird. The latter was an ordinary blackbird in every detail, and the fact of seeing the young hedge-sparrow being fed by the blackbird is,to me, concrete evidence that it was reared by the blackbird. What a problem! Fed and reared, undoubtedly, by the blackbird, the offspring of the hedge-sparrow! Why the blackbirds as foster parents? The nest has not been found. Were the eggs of the blackbird destroyed by something, and the nest abandoned?; Or did the hedge-sparrows build a nest and lay their eggs in the blackbirds eventually being driven off by the blackbirds, who again took possession, hatched and reared the nest of young white house sparrows? What exactly did occur remains a mystery".

We are very grateful to Mr.Pickering for the specimen, which may be seen at the Chester Museum - Alfred Newstead.

BLACK SPECIMEN OF THE COMMON SQUIRREL

The Zoologist 1864 page 9431

On the 18th of last October, while shooting near Watford, I distinctly saw a black squirrel,but,not knowing they were not often seen in England,I did not shoot it. I have frequently seen,near here, squirrels with fur as dark as that of a sable on their tails, and their whole body very dark. - M.R.Pryor;High Elms, Watford December 17, 1864.

Fig 1 Black squirrel near Michigan State University.
Wikipedia Creative Commons

"SPONTANEOUS" APPEARANCE OF FISH

Facebook: Paul Screeton. My wife and I stayed with a prolific authoress in Aberdeenshire around 1971 and she had just installed a small, shallow pond. One day there was a fish in it. There were only two children in the remote vicinity and neither said they were responsible. Teleportation? My own experience is more explainable. I had always wanted my own pond and when our daughter outgrew her baby bath, I sank it into the ground and filled it with water. The next morning there was a small newt swimming in it. In 30 years since I never seen another newt in the garden (except for three great cresteds someone introduced without my approval and which had gone within hours). Plenty of frogs and one toad. A fortean mystery.

Fig 2. My sister - in - law Jane took this photograph of a stag beetle outside her home in Sydenham,London,on July 1st 2013. See http://www.wildlondon.org.uk/campaigns on how to help stag beetles.

QUERIES

I found the following in Aubrey`s Monumenta Britannica : “Dr Moulins says, that he hath seen a great many round camps (ergo Danish) in Ireland. He hath also seen urns there. The Romans had a perfect knowledge of Ireland, as appears by Tacitus` Life of Agricola” Anyone know more ?

Journal Article Review

Siren canora: the mermaid and the mythical in late nineteenth-century science . H.Brink-Roby

***Archives of Natural History* 35 (1): 1-14, 2008**

The *Archives of natural history* is a very trustworthy source of information for historical natural history of interest to the cryptozoology. A case in point was `*Siren canora* : the mermaid and the mythical in late nineteenth-century science` by H.Brink-Roby. This individual covers in 14 pages the revealing facts surrounding the serious and sometimes turbulent debate surrounding the role of what we would now consider purely fantastical animals such as the dragon,satyr, driad, mermaid etc in the context of Charles Darwin`s `On the origin of species by means of natural selection` (1859) and his later `The descent of man` (1871) . I must admit as a creationist I`m pretty hostile to the whole idea of Darwinian evolution but I was also wholly ignorant as to the role of mermaids in evolution as perceived over one hundred years go.

The abstract to Brink-Roby`s paper says:" This paper argues that, for a number of naturalists and lay commentators in the second half of the nineteenth century, evolutionary - especially Darwinian - theory gave new authority to mythical creatures. These writers drew on specific elements of evolutionary theory to assert the existence of mermaids, dragons and other fabulous beasts. But mythological creatures also performed a second, often contrapositive, argumentative function; commentators who rejected evolution regularly did so by dismissing these creatures. Such critics agreed that Darwin`s theory legitimized the mythological animal, but they employed this legitimization to undermine the theory itself."

The popularity and widespread appeal of the mermaid in the Nineteenth century led to its use by critics of evolution and Darwin himself provided these critics with "ammunition" "He [Darwin] had written unequivocally to Charles Lyell in 1860: "*Our* ancestor was an animal which breathed water, had a swim-bladder, a great swimming tail…! Here is a pleasant genealogy for mankind. " [R] Patterson and the *Family herald* objected to this posited genealogy and triumphantly presented the mermaid - a figure of the purely imaginary - as the only organism that, combining the piscine and the human"

Other critics, such as Andrew Murray, Assistant Secretary of the Royal Horticultural Society, remarked on the indiscriminate mass of chaotic bodily shapes and types, such as in the mermaid which would result if Darwin`s theory were correct.

Revd Enoch Fitch Burr, in his *Pater mundi : or doctrine of evolution* (1873) proclaimed that it was the very absence of complex hybrid forms of one type of animal with another that proved Darwin`s theory of evolution wrong: " No centaur, part man and part horse, gallops on our highways - no mermaid, part woman and part fish, swims in our seas - no minotaur, part man and part ox, roams over our pastures…" Some critics saw mermaids as a possible, almost plausible means , therefore of undermining Darwin`s theory. Others saw mermaids as inevitably the missing link between aquatic animals and humans: A kind of creature in"limbo" like the sea - serpent. Brink-Roby points out that between 1872 and 1885 *Nature* contained 19 distinct contributions on the sea - serpent. Literature ranging from *Punch* to *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Edinburgh* contributed to the debate on the status of the mermaid in the newly emerging discipline of evolution as Darwin presented it.

For Charles Gould, author of Mythical Monsters(1886), " the intermediates predicted by Darwin`s theory and found in nature gave credibility to the composite organisms - the griffins, satyrs, fauns, hippogriffs, and mermaids - of mythology.

In his conclusion the author points out that in the latter part of the Nineteenth century science was divided, though not equally, into two opposing camps. The majority opinion was hostile to the belief in the "reality" of mythological animals. "For at least some naturalists and lay commentators in the period, science actually gave new authority to the fabulous and mythical."

Thanks to Paul Mead for providing me with the essay.

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